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BOOK REVIEWS

Herpes—What it is and how to cope. By Adrian Mindel and Orla Carney. London: Optima, (pp 85, £6.99). 1991. ISBN 0 356 18087 3.

At last, a book in print which deals with the subject of herpes aimed specifically at the individual infected.

Adrian Mindel and Orla Carney have set out to dispel myths and present the facts about herpes without causing panic or unnecessary stress. The book covers all aspects of the disease in a factual and understanding manner and there is an equal mix of up to date information and self help. The text includes the whole spectrum of herpes with sections on virology, transmission, clinical picture, diagnosis, treatments, associated problems, psychological aspects concluding with self help and support. Each section is presented in a clear concise way.

Herpes is an ever increasing problem in society and for many people diagnosed it can have devastating effects both psychologically and sexually. Until now most of the

literature available has either been too medically orientated or not detailed enough to satisfy the client's need for knowledge. The advantage of this book is that it addresses the problems of herpes in an holistic way combining a vast amount of information in a logical order.

Obviously this is a tremendous resource for clients, although a word of caution is needed—the first section deals with virology in some depth; some clients may be deterred by the amount of medical terminology. It is worthwhile pointing out that subsequent sections are more readable. This book is a definite must for clinic and practice libraries.

Owing to the quality of information contained in this book I would also recommend it to staff working with clients who have herpes. It deals so thoroughly with the psychology of herpes, highlighting many problems which perhaps to a non sufferer are not apparent. The section on treatments is extremely detailed and covers a whole spectrum of drug therapy, but is carefully complemented with a section on self help. The reference to support groups is invaluable to both clients and staff alike.

My overall impression of this book is that it could have an important role in the education and management of people with herpes and is a useful aid to discussion and counselling. Like all of the Positive Health guides it is easy to read, technical but without being boring.

KATE EMERSON

Recent Advances in Sexually Transmitted Diseases and AIDS. Edited by JRW Harris and SM Forster (Pp 275; £29.50). Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1991. ISBN 9-443-04123-7.

At the time of being asked to review this book I had already leafed through a volume at our local academic bookshop and was seriously considering whether to obtain my own copy or to encourage and wait for the department to buy one. It was therefore with great pleasure that I set about reading the copy that arrived courtesy of *Genitourinary Medicine*.

The book is the fourth in this series of *Recent Advances*. To reflect the growing importance of HIV infection the title of the series has been revised.

The format as with previous issues is that of a number of review articles. In the 11 chapters a wide range of subjects are covered, virtually all of relevance to daily genitourinary practice. The contents are about equally divided between HIV related topics and other sexually transmitted diseases. Most of the contributors are UK based, many of whom are distinguished "household names".

Topics covered include: common clinical AIDS manifestations, HTLV 1 and 2 infection, prostitution, intravenous drug use, prostatitis, sexually transmitted diseases in the third world, and the diagnosis and treatment of gonorrhoea and chlamydial infection.

Most of the articles are well written and excellently referenced. A model review is that by Professor Taylor Robinson who in 44 pages draws together over 360 references mostly of work in the last five years. He covers clinical aspects of genital chlamydial infection as well as developments in diagnostic methods and current treatment regimes.

Of the sections that deal with HIV related problems a number of articles are particularly noteworthy. The section on injection drug use and HIV written by Dr Brettell and his colleagues in Edinburgh is packed with practical insights and should appeal to anyone who deals with the occasional intravenous drug user. The review includes an extensive discussion of the development of HIV in the IVDU population around Europe and a collation of the limited data on IVDU and HIV in prisons.

Advances in our understanding and refinements for the treatment of HIV infection are being made rapidly. It is therefore not surprising that certain sections, particularly those on clinical management of AIDS, already appear a little dated. However, both the sections on *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia and on Kaposi's sarcoma do still provide highly readable and concise accounts of developments to the start of last year.

In the short time I have had this book I have found it both interesting and useful. I have referred to it a number of times to get a reference or to bring up to date a lecture to students or staff (I have even attended a meeting

where sections have been referenced by a speaker). This book will be an invaluable aide to all those wishing to catch up on developments in selected areas of genitourinary medicine. I would strongly recommend that every department makes sure their staff have ready access to a copy.

R PATEL

Sexually Transmitted Diseases. A Textbook of Genito-Urinary Medicine. Edited by G W Csonka, J K Oates (Pp 564; £49.50). London: Bailliere-Tindall, 1990. ISBN 0-7020-1258-0.

This multi-author text with its eye catching cover adds another alternative to the growing number of books on sexually transmitted diseases.

The book is clearly laid out. There are 42 chapters under 13 section headings covering a wide range of allied topics as well as the standard sexually transmitted diseases. Genital malignancies, pregnancy and contraception have designated chapters and I was particularly pleased to see the problem of child abuse and rape including its medicolegal aspects addressed.

The two editors are eminent genitourinary physicians and a wealth of clinical experience is demonstrated in their chapter contributions. Unfortunately this text runs into problems with having multiple authors. Some chapters are well written, illustrated and referenced whereas others are not of such good quality. There is some repetition of material, as acknowledged by the editors, but there is also inconsistency. Appendix 2 entitled a "simplified approach for STD" has the fashionable algorithmic approach which is often far from simple. The treatment schedules in this and Appendix 3 do not always agree with those in the chapters, which is very confusing. There is little information on the practical techniques of history and specimen taking and the microbiological aspects of some conditions are hardly discussed. However there are some masterpieces. The section on "non-specific" genital infection and chapters on viral hepatitis, AIDS and genital dermatoses deserve special credit.

This book recently received a tough

review in the British Medical Journal. Although there are some deficiencies and I would say it is not my choice for the definitive specialist reference text its great advantage over competitors from the United States and Scotland is that it is extremely readable. It may be more appropriate for those in post-graduate training at diploma level and other physicians with an interest in the subject than the specialist genitourinary physician. Undergraduates may find smaller alternatives serve their purpose and pocket better than this £49.50 text. Nevertheless this book once purchased is less likely to collect (or show) the dust than many others.

A J ROBINSON

limited to 20 and the closing date is 28 June, 1991. Interested members should contact:

The Secretary,
Dr D A Hicks
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Royal Hallamshire Hospital,
Glossop Road,
Sheffield S10 2JF.

or
The President,
Dr A B Alawattagama,
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NOTICE

Northern Genito-Urinary Physicians Colposcopy Group

The Second Theoretical and Practical Course in Colposcopy for Genito-Urinary Physicians will be held 4-6 October, 1991, Clatterbridge Hospital on the Wirral.

A wide range of topics in colposcopy will be covered including: Aetiology, pathology, diagnosis and treatment of CIN, screening programmes, basic colposcopy, setting up a colposcopy service in GUM and confidentiality. There will be treatment demonstrations with the CO₂ laser, loop diathermy, cold coagulator, etc (not on patients).

Course fee £275 will include all meals including the Society Banquet in Thornton Hall. The accompanying guest fee is £75 which includes two nights accommodation, bed and breakfast and evening meal with Society Banquet. Numbers are strictly